

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LUSAKA 01917 071500Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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O R 071326Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 6044
INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L LUSAKA 1917

EXDIS

PRETORIA PLEASE PASS TO AMB LOW ON HIS ARRIVAL AT JAN SMUTS
JUL 7

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV RH US UK
SUBJ: CONSULTATIVE GROUP MEETING WITH NKOMO

REF: STATE 157288; LUSAKA 1901

1. THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP MET WITH NKOMO ON THE MORNING
OF JULY 7 FOR OVER TWO HOURS. PRESENT WERE ZAPU OFFICIALS
SILUNDIKA, MSIKA, MADZIMBAMUTO, AS WELL AS LOWER LEVEL ZANU REPS.
NKOMO SAID MUGABE COULD NOT BE AT THE MEETING BUT WOULD BE IN
MAPUTO IF THE CG WANTED TO VISIT THERE TO SEE HIM IN THE NEXT FEW
DAYS. HE STATED THAT WHAT HE HAD TO SAY WERE THE CONSIDERED ALD
FORMAL VIEWS OF THE PATRIOTIC FRONT, INCLUDING ZAPU AND ZANU.

2. IN GENERAL, NKOMO STUCK TO THE LINES OF HIS PRESS CONFERENCE
YESTERDAY (REFTEL B). HE DID NOT GIVE US A DOCUMENT, CONTENDING
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THAT HE HAD ONLY PROMISED TO TRANSMIT HIS VIEWS WHEN HE SAW US A
MONTH AGO, NOT A WRITTEN STATEMENT ON ANY PARTICULAR SUBJECT.
DURING THE COURSE OF A RUNDOWN ON HIS THINKING ON BOTH THE
CONSTITUTION AND THE INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS, HE REFUSED TO SUPPLY
ANY DETAILS. HE SAID HE COULD NOT GIVE THESE TO A GROUP "IN
TRANSIT". HE WANTED A FORMAL MEETING BETWEEN THE PF, SMITH AND
THE BRITISH, WHERE PARTICIPANTS WOULD HAVE THE POWER NOT ONLY TO

DISCUSS BUT TO AGREE ON THE MAIN SUBJECT, WHICH WOULD BE THE CHARACTER OF THE TRANSITION GOVERNMENT. LATER A CONSTITUTION COULD BE DISCUSSED. THERE WERE NO PROBLEMS ON THIS ANYWAY AND TO CONSIDER IT AHEAD OF TIME WAS AN ACADEMIC EXERCISE AND A WASTE OF TIME.

3. NKOMO OBVIOUSLY SAW THE MEETING AS A DISCUSSION BETWEEN HIMSELF AND THE BRITISH. GRAHAM MADE CLEAR THAT WE DID NOT WANT TO HAVE ANOTHER CONFERENCE THAT FAILED, TO WHICH NKOMO REPLIED THAT GENEVA DIDN'T FAIL SO FAR AS HE WAS CONCERNED. THE ZANU REP OBJECTED TO THE FORM OF THE CONSULTATIONS AND PARTICULARLY TO THE FACT THAT WHILE WE KNEW THE VIEWS OF THE VARIOUS PARTICIPANTS, NONE OF THEM KNEW THE VIEWS OF THE OTHERS.

4. ON THE CONSTITUTION, NKOMO SAID HE HAD NO PROBLEM WITH THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES ON WHICH THE U.S. AND UK AGREED, I.E., DEMOCRATIC ELECTION, ONE-MAN-ONE-VOTE, A BILL OF RIGHTS AND AN INDEPENDENT JUDICIARY, BUT HE WOULD NOT BE DRAWN INTO ANY MORE DETAILED DISCUSSION OF OTHER PROVISIONS, LIKE HOW MANY HOUSES THE PARLIAMENT WOULD HAVE AND WHETHER THE ELECTION WOULD BE BY SINGLE MEMBER DISTRICT OR PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION.

5. ALL AGREED THAT THE MOST DIFFICULT PROBLEMS CONCERN TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS. NKOMO ASKED THE BRITISH VIEW AND SHOWED SOME SURPRISE AT THE RESPONSE THAT THEY WERE PREPARED TO TAKE OVER AND ADMINISTER THE COUNTRY DURING THE INTERIM PERIOD. HE ASKED

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WHETHER THEY PROPOSE TO GOVERN THROUGH THE EXISTING STRUCTURE. GRAHAM AND STEEL MADE CLEAR THAT THE QUESTION WAS HOW MUCH OF

THE GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE SHOULD REMAIN AND HOW MUCH SHOULD BE

REPLACED. THIS WAS THE SUBJECT ON WHICH WE WANTED THEIR VIEWS. GRADUALLY NKOMO MADE CLEAR THAT THE PF TOOK THE POSITION THAT IT HAD ITS OWN TRAINED ARMY, POLICE FORCE, IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS OFFICIALS WHO COULD REPLACE THE EXISTING CADRES. THE CIVIL SERVICE WAS A QUESTION TO BE DISCUSSED. HE AGREED THAT THERE WOULD BE ELECTIONS DURING THE INTERIM PERIOD. WHEN WE EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF THEIR BEING IMPARTIALLY ADMINISTERED, HE MADE ABSOLUTELY CLEAR THAT SO FAR AS THE PF WAS CONCERNED, THIS WAS A STRUGGLE FOR POWER. HE DID NOT INTEND TO MELT AWAY ONCE SMITH WAS DEFEATED, AS THE BRITISH HICOM PUT IT, THE PF INTENDED TO CONTROL THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT; EVEN THE MATTER OF WHO WOULD BE IN CHARGE (FOR EXAMPLE, WHETHER OR NOT THERE SHOULD BE A BRITISH GOVERNOR GENERAL), NKOMO BELIEVED, WAS STILL UP FOR DISCUSSION.

6. GRAHAM NOTED THE DIFFICULTY OF THE PROBLEM OF MAINTAINING LAW AND ORDER AND ASKED NKOMO'S VIEWS ABOUT THE PROPOSAL THAT FIELD COMMANDERS ON THE TWO SIDES GET TOGETHER TO WORK THIS OUT. NKOMO REJECTED THIS IDEA OUT OF HAND, SAYING THIS WAS A POLITICAL DECISION. GRAHAM ALSO ASKED ABOUT THE ACCEPTABILITY OF A COMMONWEALTH FORCE. NKOMO DID NOT REJECT THIS IDEA BUT RATHER SAID IT WAS A COMPLICATED SUBJECT, INCLUDING WHICH NATIONS WERE TO BE INVOLVED, ON WHAT BASIS, WHAT THEIR MISSION WAS TO BE, AND THAT ALL THIS NEEDED TO BE DISCUSSED ON A FORMAL OCCASION.

7. IN PARTING, NKOMO READILY AGREED THAT WE SHOULD CONTINUE IN CONTACT.

8. COMMENT: THE MEETING WAS LONG AND THE DISCUSSION INTENSIVE BUT CONFIDENTIAL

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THE ATMOSPHERE WAS NOT UNFRIENDLY. NKOMO AND HIS DELEGATION APPEARED GENUINELY TO WANT TO CONTINUE NEGOTIATIONS BUT ENTIRELY ON THEIR OWN TERMS. THEY DID NOT AT ANY TIME CHALLENGE THE SINCERITY OF OUR EFFORT. NKOMO SEEMS TO HAVE SET HIS LINE FOR THE TIME BEING AND HE IS UNLIKELY TO MOVE OFF OF IT EASILY. IN MY VIEW, THE ONLY THING THAT WOULD SHAKE HIM IS THE POSSIBILITY THAT HE MIGHT BE LEFT OUT BY THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A VIABLE ALTERNATIVE, THAT IS, EITHER AN INTERNAL SOLUTION WITH SITHOLE OR AN ELECTION UNDER THE OWEN PROPOSALS WHICH IS OPEN TO ALL PARTIES AND IN WHICH AT LEAST SITHOLE AND MUZOREWA WOULD PARTICIPATE. AFTER WE HAVE BEEN TO SALISBURY, WE MAY HAVE A CLEARER VIEW OF THE ROAD PICTURE. LOW

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